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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – *The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law held a hearing on the "Ethical Imperative for Reform of our Immigration System" (*http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/hear_100714.html*)*. Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL-4), who is a Member of Subcommittee and is Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Task Force on Immigration, issued the following statement:

I am so pleased to welcome today's leaders from the faith community because their authoritative, steady voice has made a tremendous contribution to efforts to fix America's immigration system. When House Republicans voted to criminalize all undocumented immigrants in 2005, threatening to put family members, clergy, and landlords in legal jeopardy, it was the faith community that first sounded the alarm. That helped spark the massive demonstrations against immigrant criminalization and for comprehensive immigration reform in 2006.

Immigration reform is still possible this year. The President, in his speech at American

University and the Justice Department's lawsuit against Arizona's law, is asserting the preeminent federal role in setting and enforcing immigration policy and that makes it incumbent on Congress to follow through by passing a reform bill. The American people demand law and order and secure borders and comprehensive immigration reform is the only way to get there.

Democrats and Republicans agree on 80% of a reform package: border security, legal immigration, a secure worker verification system, and deportation for serious, violent criminals. All of those elements are in my bill, H.R. 4321, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act. The main obstacle is that some Republicans are holding out for the fantasy that more than ten million immigrants will leave on their own or be driven out of the country.

The premise of their approach to immigration is that the estimated 10.8 million undocumented immigrants -- two-thirds of whom have been here more than a decade, half of whom live in families with children that are mostly U.S. citizens -- are going to abandon the United States. The Democrats have a much more practical and popular approach that would get immigrants who are here illegally registered with the government, in the system, and on-the-books.

Even House Republicans say we can get a bill passed in the House this year. Mario and Lincoln Diaz-Balart each stated on a conference call with reporters last week sponsored by Conservatives for Comprehensive Immigration Reform that a bill could pass tomorrow. I think once we get past the Arizona GOP primary that sparked the most recent anti-immigration reform eruption, we will have a chance of getting some of the Republicans in the Senate to also come forward and work with Democrats to get a bill passed.

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